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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

WEDNESDAY, JULY 25, 2007

In Today's Papers

Parliamentary Presidential Election

All papers: Mainstream Milliyet says, following the general elections, PM Erdogan announced that his party will seek compromise in the presidential elections. Since the party has only 340 seats in the parliament, and needs a quorum of 367 to elect the president, seeking compromise is the only alternative for AKP. Mainstream Vatan gives extensive coverage to the presidential election issue and questions whether FM Gul will withdraw his candidacy or not. All papers report that FM Gul will hold a press conference today and among other issues he will disclose his views on the presidential elections. [Note: At a noon press conference Gul declined to say whether he would be a candidate, but did not rule out the possibility.]

CHP Leader Baykal Appears Before Press, Declines to Resign

All papers: CHP leader Deniz Baykal appeared before the press for the first time after the elections and claimed that the party has been increasing its votes and that he is not considering resigning from the party chairmanship. Meanwhile, the opponents of Baykal held a meeting yesterday and announced that Baykal's resignation from party chairmanship would not be enough and that he should leave politics. Former CHP chairman Hikmet Cetin, Mayor of the Istanbul district of Sisli Mustafa Sarigul, Onur Kumbaracibasi, Adnan Keskin, Mehmet Mogultay, Celal Dogan were among those who attended the meeting.

Answering questions of NTV, DSP leader Zeki Sezer said that the Left should not give the image that they are fighting among themselves and should instead discuss what they need to do together.

KONDA Polling Results

Liberal Radikal reports that according to Konda Polling company economic concerns were the main factor shaping the preference of voters. Concerns over secularism and democracy, which were the main

debates among the political elite of Turkey before the elections, did not constitute a major factor in the electorate's voting preferences.

Editorial Opinion: West Has Superficial View of Turkey's Election
Sami Kohen writes in the mainstream daily Milliyet: "The Western public and press pay attention to Turkish elections with a preconceived notion as well as with worries about Islam. The elections are presented as if it is a choice between Islam and secularism. As a result, the results are misinterpreted: [according to Westerners] Turkish elections ended with a victory for Islamism and a defeat for secularism. Religion has certainly played a role in shaping people's opinions however it did not play a dominant role. Moreover it would be very wrong to depict AKP voters as entirely religious. The main motives for this election were practical reasons like economic and social factors and were not ideological. The foreign press is also often making another mistake by evaluating the election results in terms of civilian-military relations, and concluding that the military is the loser. The election result cannot be interpreted as a 'response to the military' as surveys indicate that the military's e-warning was not a dominant factor in shaping people's choices. Facts about Turkish politics are much deeper than they appear to be according to the shallow interpretations, such as just looking at the secularism-religion or military-civilian angles."

Ibrahim Karagul writes in the Islamist-oriented daily Yeni Safak: "The Turkish people's message is very clear. The election results call for an atmosphere of no tension, reconciliation and unification. Turkish rulers got those messages, while the EU and the US continue to misread the whole situation. Western press insists on making assessments based on 'internal conflict'

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scenarios. They present the election results with a tension-building psychology. Turkey is very tired of tension builders and conflict seekers. For instance, the statement by Franco Frattini of the EU Commission talking about the [post-election] need to protect the 'secular minority' is absolutely dangerous and provocative. These words have the potential to cause conflict in Turkey. Another example is the statement from former US Ambassador Mark Parris, as he talked about how the Turkish army lost the elections, which is utterly provocative. Some circles in the US have been disseminating lies about the AKP, saying that it works toward the goal of an Islamic state, and somehow they still continue in making those untrue arguments. The essence of the election results is this: Turkish voters rejected ethnic nationalism, inward-looking policies and anti-democratic practices, and voted in favor of the supremacy of law."

President Bush Calls PM Erdogan to Congratulate
Milliyet, Sabah, Zaman, Vatan, Hurriyet and others: Papers report that President Bush called PM Erdogan yesterday afternoon to congratulate him for the success of the AKP in the elections.

TV Highlights
NTV (7 A.M.)

Domestic News

In an interview with La Repubblica retired General Edip Baser said the military might intervene again if the presidential election process is derailed.

A van carrying bread for a gendarmerie station in Tunceli was set on fire by PKK terrorists after the driver was moved away from the van

Turkish Airlines has decided on a lockout to cope with a possible strike of its workers

International News

Iraqi Kurdish Administration President Barzani expressed hope that the election results in Turkey would lead to improvement of

relations between Iraq and Turkey.

Bulgarian medics were freed after Libya and the EU reached a deal

The US and Iran met in Baghdad to discuss the Iraq issue

WILSON